

(July 15, 2014)

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, for over five decades now, the Chinese Communist Party has ruled Tibet harshly and has treated the Tibetan people with great disdain.

The current regime says that Tibet is open to all visitors, but the truth is that actual access is highly restricted and is subject to arbitrary closures. It is difficult for tourists to access the region, and it is almost impossible for journalists and diplomats to get in to report on conditions.

When Chinese officials get visas to the U.S., they are not kept out of certain States or cities. They are free to travel our Nation, as are Chinese tourists and reporters. It is time that the Chinese Government lives up to its word and allows access to Tibet, not only for Americans, but for the many religious pilgrims from nations around the world.

I am a proud cosponsor of Congressman McGovern's bill, H.R. 4851, the Reciprocal Access to Tibet Act of 2014. The bill restricts access to America for those Chinese Government officials who are responsible for blocking travel to Tibet. This is a matter of basic fairness and is critical to ensuring that human rights are protected in Tibet.

ENSURING PATIENT ACCESS AND EFFECTIVE DRUG ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2014

(July 29, 2014)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4709) to improve enforcement efforts related to prescription drug diversion and abuse, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Pitts) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Pallone) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

General Leave

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous materials into the Record on the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today is important and necessary legislation to bring greater clarity to the requirements for the safe and secure distribution and dispensing of controlled substances to combat the abuse of prescription drugs. H.R. 4709, the Ensuring Patient Access and Effective Drug Enforcement Act, introduced by my colleagues, Representative Tom Marino of Pennsylvania, Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee, Peter Welch of Vermont, and Judy Chu of California, will facilitate greater collaboration between industry stakeholders and regulators in an effort to combat our Nation's prescription drug abuse epidemic.

Safeguarding our prescription drug supply chain is important to protect against diversion and abuse of prescription medicines. H.R. 4709 will clarify key terminology in the Controlled Substances Act to give registrants a better understanding of their responsibilities under the law.

Further, the bill will allow DEA-registered companies to submit corrective action plans to address potential violations in the absence of an imminent danger, creating a more robust and meaningful dialogue about addressing drug diversion.

That should in turn curtail unnecessary supply chain disruptions that adversely affect patient access to much-needed medications.

Additionally, the legislation requires that a report be submitted to Congress by the Secretary of HHS in consultation with the DEA and other government and industry stakeholders about how collaboration between enforcement agencies and industry can benefit patients and prevent diversion and abuse.

Equally important, H.R. 4709 will improve enforcement efforts regarding the complex and challenging problem of prescription drug diversion and abuse. It will ensure patient access to necessary medications by creating a more collaborative partnership between drug manufacturers, wholesalers, retail pharmacies, and Federal enforcement and oversight agencies such as DEA and the FDA.

After hearings last April in the Health Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which I chair, we heard that a more feasible and practical solution to this serious problem of drug diversion and abuse is attainable, and those provisions are included in H.R. 4709. The legislation is supported by the National Community Pharmacists Association, the National Association of Chain Drug Stores, the Healthcare Distribution Management Association, as well as the Alliance to Prevent the Abuse of Medicines, among others.

I would like to acknowledge and thank my good friend, Congressman Tom Marino, for his excellent work with this legislation. My friend from Pennsylvania is a former district attorney and former U.S. attorney. He understands the importance of law enforcement in this area. But he also understands that we will be more effective if we proceed in a collaborative, communicative, and transparent fashion. He has done excellent work here.

Mr. Speaker, by approving this legislation, we will be giving our Nation's law enforcement additional tools while protecting our patients and securing our drug supply chain in a reasonable, commonsense way.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill and vote for H.R. 4709.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this

bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McClintock). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Pitts) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4709, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RUSSIA

(September 10, 2014)

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, Vladimir Putin lives in an alternate reality, one where the state is still all-powerful and can control reality for its citizens.

In the 1930s, Stalin could make people disappear by sending them to the gulags and then erasing any mention of them in state archives. By controlling all information, he could pretend that black was white and up was down.

Today, in Russia, Putin wants to pretend that the Ukrainian insurgency is homegrown, that Russian soldiers on the other side of the border are lost or just volunteers. He wants to pretend that Kiev is controlled by Nazis. His state-owned media dutifully reports these fictions as fact.

The Soviet Union hasn't existed in more than 20 years. It collapsed out of weakness, and Russia remains weak and wholly dependent on energy exports today. Putin can pretend all he wants, but the reality is that he does not have the power of the secretary general or the czars. Let's not let him turn his dreams into reality by abandoning our friends and NATO allies. We must stand up for their freedom and support them more vigorously.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH CARE PROTECTION ACT OF 2014

(September 10, 2014)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 717, I call up the bill (H.R. 3522) to authorize health insurance issuers to continue to offer for sale current group health insurance coverage in satisfaction of the minimum essential health insurance coverage requirement, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. Simpson). Pursuant to House Resolution 717, the amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113-56, modified by the amendment printed in House Report 113-584, is adopted. The bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows: